



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

Wilmington District

FOR RELEASE: Immediately

12 July 2006

POC: Penny Schmitt (910) 251-4626

Corps imposes ban on Kite Tubing at five regional lakes

Wilmington, North Carolina—In accord with other Corps Lakes around the nation and recreation areas managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, has imposed an immediate prohibition on the use of a new extreme water sports device known as a “Kite Tube.”

Kite Tubes are immediately prohibited on B. Everett Jordan Lake, Falls Lake, John H. Kerr (Buggs Island) Lake, Philpott Lake, and W. Kerr Scott Lake, all located within the Wilmington District. Other Corps Districts, including all other Districts in South Atlantic Division (South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama as well as North Carolina) have also issued prohibitions at their lakes.

Pulled behind a boat, this cloth structure is intended to rise up into the air, giving the rider an aerial thrill. Unfortunately, the circular kite tubes, which are shaped roughly like a large-size child’s wading pool, can be highly unstable in the air. In a number of incidents riders have been suddenly thrown into the water at dangerous speeds and from significant heights—the devices can sail to 45 to 60 feet above the water surface. The device can be difficult to control, and can be suddenly upended or destabilized by wind gusts or even thrown out of the air by a slowing or stopping boat.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has recorded two deaths, and is currently investigating the device. Other reported injuries have been extremely serious or fatal, including internal trauma, torn muscles, broken arms or legs, broken ribs, punctured lungs and spinal cord injuries. Injuries in North Carolina, according to State Wildlife Resources Commission Officials, have included a broken leg suffered by a man kite-tubing on Falls Lake who fell 20 feet, and a fractured spine suffered by a man kite tubing on Lake Norman near Charlotte.

North Carolina and Virginia state recreation authorities with facilities on the five Corps of Engineers lakes are cooperating with the Corps in discouraging use of the kite tubes.

“We want people to have a fun, safe time enjoying the water on our lakes,” said Wilmington District Commander Col. John E. Pulliam, Jr. “Kite tubes as they are currently designed apparently make people too vulnerable to deadly injury. We’re not going to allow such hazardous activities on our lakes.”

Noting that Wilmington District Lakes have already been the scene of several drowning deaths this summer, Col. Pulliam added: “A safe return home from an outing at one of our lakes is our idea of the perfect ending to a perfect day. This is just one more way we are doing our best to ensure the recreating public does not take unnecessary risks. Kite tubes represent an unwarranted risk and threat to life and limb, and we will treat them as such.”